WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. VI.] OCTOBER, 1890. [No. 10.

☞ The eschatology long held in the Church has waxed old and is ready to vanish away. This magazine has been established to aid in the formation of the new. It points out the new and definite principle around which it must be built up, namely, the redemptive value of resurrection. Specimen copies are frequently sent to those who are likely to be interested in the subjects of which it treats. As these are sent at our own option, no one is thereby put under any obligation to subscribe. Some of its readers, however, will perceive that this magazine has an important mission. We beg leave to remind such that it is not conducted as a business, but as a missionary enterprise, and that it must be supported as such. If we have been called of God to undertake this work, those who discern its importance are also called to consider whether they ought not to help sustain it, at least to the extent of a subscription.

PERSONAL.

A letter recently received from a friend of this magazine enclosing an annual contribution for its support gives me occasion to say that, had it not been for the sympathy and

support of a very few such friends, I would have been compelled to abandon the undertaking. To them, and above all to Him who prompts to all goods deeds, my thanks are due. The thought sometimes comes to me that, since the Presbyterian Church has taken up the work which I originally urged upon it, and since I have made repeated testimony to the only principles upon which this business of Revision can be successfully accomplished, I might now lay down the burden of this magazine. But there are so many important aspects of the eschatological problem still demanding attention—particularly those forced upon us by the newer Science of the day—that I would like, if possible, to contribute something to a solution that will save for us the essentials of our precious Christian faith, without closing our eyes to truth that is being forced upon us from these new fields. If I did not believe that a long and special study of these themes had given some special fitness and imposed some special obligation for this work, I would at once retire from it. But it seems to me that the outlines of a perfect solution of the dark problem of the future are all the time growing clearer, and that this magazine has a work to do in tracing them which has not yet been done by any other hand.

It is quite probable that some of its readers will look upon recent articles as a rash venture into regions of dangerous speculation. I must beg such friends to be indulgent, and to believe that my desire is not in any way to sacrifice or to compromise the Christian faith, but to show that there are hidden in it all depths of wisdom and knowledge,—even these recent treasures which modern scientific research is bringing to light.

THE HUMAN RACE AN ORGANISM.

In these days, when the scientific study of man is tracing out the links by which one generation is tied to another in the line of life, and giving new importance to the law of heredity, it is well for us to turn to Scripture and read anew the proofs it furnishes in the same direction, showing that the human race is never viewed by it as a mere aggregation of individuals, but as an organism, having corporate life and responsibility and destiny.

It was on this principle that, in the so-called fall of man, his "seed" was treated as partaking in the common life and taint, and as sharing in the consequences (Gen. iii, 15). In Romans v, St. Paul plainly teaches that, as the result of this organic connection, the many are included in the one. The sin of one was the sin of all. So also "by the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous."

This principle is put into the second commandment in the declaration that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, while the blessing of keeping Jehovah's commandments goes down to even thousands of generations (see Deut. vii, 9)—a striking proof of St. Paul's assertion that, in this divine constitution of the race, grace "much more abounds."

The Scriptures are full of references to this principle. It is because of it that "all the families of the earth" are made capable of blessing through a chosen seed (Gen. xii, 3). In the light of it we can see how the Hebrews would regard barrenness as a curse, the failure or loss of offspring

and the blotting out of a name in Israel, as a special judgment from God (Ps. xxi, 10; xxxvii, 28).

We are not surprised to hear penitent offspring confessing the sins of their fathers. In Leviticus xxvi, 40–42, such confession is made a mark of true repentance and a condition of restoration; and, on His part, Jehovah promises to remember His covenant with their ancestors and to bless them. So also a chosen seed in Jeremiah's day confess "We have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God." Because Ahab humbled himself before the Lord, after being rebuked by Elijah, the word came to him, "I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house." In Jeremiah ii, we have all the families of Jacob and Israel arraigned before the Lord and charged with the sins of their fathers, for which He declares that He will plead with them and with their children's children (5–9). No principle is thus more constantly recognized. This same prophet thus sums it up: "Ah, Lord God. . . . Thou shewest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them . . . for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (xxxii, 18, 19).

This principle is not due to any arbitrary arrangement of sovereign will. God has put it into the very constitution of the race. It is because the race has unity and corporate life, as truly individual as that of the members of it, that it is thus treated. St. Paul's comparison of it

to a tree (Rom. xi), from which branches may be broken off and others grafted in, and into which a new form of life may thus be infused, well illustrates the position of the race. This grand trunk of humanity, down through all its branches, its twigs and leaves and buds, shares in a common life and destiny. And the law of the whole is the law of its separate portions. Jesus viewed the generation of Jews in His day as about to be visited for the sins of their fathers. "Ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? . . . That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation" (Matt. xxiii, 31–36).

But, as we have seen, this law by which curse is transmitted for sin is equally and even more powerfully operative for the transference of blessing. It is because of it that the anointed seed—the true Son of Man—could bring forgiveness and life and healing to the race. The law works both ways, and where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound.

A POINT OVERLOOKED.

But while theology has generally perceived and admired this gracious provision, by which the righteousness of one man becomes the justification of the many, it has not yet recognized the full sequence of this principle. It fails to

confess that the law of the Christ is the law for all the members of the Christ-body, and for the race. If there is redemptive power in the Christ, there must be also in each Christly man in whom He is formed. Each member of the chosen seed must therefore in his lower sphere sustain a redemptive relation to those with whom his life is linked, which the Head sustains to the race. The victories which he may win in the battle of life, he wins not only for himself, but for those who have gone before him. This principle, for which we have been making contention as essential to a right understanding of Scripture, is only a necessary corollary to the view which it compels us to take of the human race as an organism. If, under this constitution of things I am compelled to bear the iniquity of my ancestors and suffer punishment for their sins, natural justice would seem to require that my obedient submission to the will of God should inure to their benefit. If the race-life in me is burdened for their sins, why may it not also be justified and freed from sin in me? Why may not benefits be transferred backward, as well as curses be transmitted forward. We have shown in other numbers that upon no other principle than this is an intelligent interpretation of Old Testament promises possible. We see now that this principle is wrought into the organism of the race, and that if it has availed to its cursing, it avails much more for its blessing. We see a new meaning in the selection of a chosen seed in which all the kindreds of the earth are to be blessed. And we discern new motives for our own personal holiness and victory over the world. We see, also, as never before how "the hurt of one is the concern of all" and how the good of one is the good of all.

New aspects of the brotherhood of man are opened before us, and a new dignity and sacredness are put upon these ties of kindred and fellowship which bind us as members of the human family to each other. We see, also, why the final pictures of redemption in the Bible are not individualistic but general—of humanity, as such, organized and corporate, a commonwealth under whose shadow the nations find rest, a city to whose gates the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor. The complete redemption of the individual is bound up with that of the race. We cannot reach the final goal apart from our brethren. Those that have gone before "without us cannot be made perfect" (Heb. xi, 40). A great cloud of witnesses watch our struggles on this arena of life, not merely as sympathizing spectators, but as those who have tremendous personal interests at stake in the result.

We find then in these organic relations of mankind, by which, while one must bear the sin of another, he may also become another's justification, a complete answer to a whole class of objections to the goodness of the divine government. Men are continually declaiming against the injustice of the principle that one man should suffer punishment for the sin of another, whereas really it is the one race-life which in them both is reaping the fruit of its sin and undergoing its necessary chastisement. Moreover, while the children thus suffer on account of the fathers, the fathers experience the benefit of whatever fruits of righteousness may ripen in the children. The race-life coming to victory in them may lift up those of its line behind it who failed in the conflict. The fact that they died on the field and were carried off as wounded captives

to sheol—the realm of death—can make no difference with Him who is the God not of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him. This indeed is the mystery of the gospel, that death can at no point frustrate His plans or defeat the operations of His power and grace. Death becomes the minister of their execution. This is the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. His flesh which He gave for the life of the world is both life for the living and resurrection for the dead. And His life repeated in us is also our baptism for (in behalf of) the dead. We believe most firmly that we who, under the burden of ancestral sins, are struggling with life's temptations in this world, are contending also for those who have gone before. If we fell in them, they may also rise in us. If we suffer on their account, they may rejoice on our account. If the guilt of their sin is accumulated on us, as we roll off the burden and rise above it in Christ, we open to them prison doors and let the oppressed go free. We cannot see how, in the government of a just and loving God, this principle can be enforced on one side and not on the other; how, if we are connected with our ancestors by such lines of life that their iniquity becomes ours, they ought not to share in our relief from and triumph over that iniquity. The old adage, "It is a poor rule that will not work both ways," here applies. This principle works both backwards and forwards in the government of God. If it affects generations to come it applies also to those that are past. It is woven into the whole fabric of the human race and is the underlying principle of the Bible scheme of creation and redemption. Without it the Scriptures remain a sealed book, and, until the Christian Church acknowledges

it, she must continue to be, as at this day, but a marred and broken section of that glorious temple of humanity which God intends to erect upon her foundations, and which He shall yet fill with His eternal praise.

"Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto Thy works. *All nations whom Thou has made* shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great and doest wondrous things: Thou art God alone" (Ps. lxxxvi, 8–10).

RACE REDEMPTION.

If my ancestor's sin becomes my condemnation, why may not my righteousness become his justification? Let us see. The only principle upon which the son can be justly condemned for his father's sin is that of unity in life. The race-life of the father is transmitted to the son and carries with it its taint, and must bear in the son its appointed penalty. But if the race-life in the son emerges from under this burden of sin, if its channels become cleansed and purified in him, through the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, why may not all previous partakers in that race-life feel the benefit? If this law of identity in life brought condemnation to those coming after, why should it not also bring justification to those who went before? Such is precisely the divine constitution of things. This is part of the ways of our redeeming God, whose judgments are unsearchable and whose ways are past finding out, of whom every family in heaven and earth is named, and whose love in Christ passeth knowledge and filleth all heights and depths of being.

HUMAN BROTHERHOOD.

The brotherhood of man arises out of this fact that the race is an organism, made of one blood, its members bound together in one body of humanity. It is only in the light of this Scripture view of man that this subject of human brotherhood, about which we hear so much in these days, can be understood. One of the chief movements in this direction is the existing labor unions. These attempt to bind men together as brothers for a common object. The hurt of one is made the concern of all. But their idea of brotherhood embraces only a class and a clan. It is irrespective of the rights and interests of others. It was pitiful to read the letters of Mr. Powderly during the late strikes, in which he speaks of the wrongs of laborers and the rights of American manhood, while it is one of the first principles of his organization to deny those rights to workmen who will not join his order. We have known of Christian men who could not in conscience join trade unions, because they believed their methods to be both un-Christian and unbrotherly. We can well understand how the follower of Christ, who commands us to resist not evil and to love our neighbors as ourselves, would refuse to join an organization that proposes to resist evil by striking back, and that refuses all neighborly kindness to fellow-workmen who will not surrender their freedom to its behest. Such labor reformers need to learn the first principles of human brotherhood, and to read anew the parable of the good Samaritan. Even the hated capitalist is their neighbor; much more is the poor "scab," who may, from

perfectly good motives, refuse to join their order, and whose right to work for his own and his family's living in his own way is as good as theirs. Human brotherhood is indeed the goal of the race, when every man shall think not only on his own things, but the things of others, and when his highest happiness and noblest advancement shall be found in promoting the welfare of others. But it can never come along such narrow lines of caste as limit the term brother to those of our own guild, and where the good of some must be pursued at the expense of others who are equally brothers in the great family of the common Father of us all.

The fact is, that both the Church and the world need a wider education in the doctrine of man, the relation of the individual to the race, and in the operation of these organic laws which bind us all together in the bundle of life. They need to understand better the radical principle that each man has his part to bear in the common burden of humanity, and that humble submission to the will of God in that discipline of life to which each is appointed is for the good of all. Not by compelling society to bear our burdens, but by our voluntary submission to its burdens will both the individual and the race best find relief from its weary load of suffering and of sin.

DR. HOLMES ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

This bright and genial writer, in the series of articles he is now giving in the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly*, entitled, "Over the Teacups," ventures to give his opinion upon the burning question of future punishment. He justifies

his intrusion as a layman into this province of theology by the fact that he was invited to write one of the papers in the series recently published called "That Unknown Country," and from the circumstances of his own position as now treading on its verge. He writes:

There are some, there may be many, who would like to hear what impressions one has received on the subject referred to, after a long life in which he has heard and read a great deal about the matter. There is a certain gravity in the position of one who is, in the order of nature, very near the undiscovered country. A man who has passed his eighth decade feels as if he were already in the ante-chambers of the apartments which he may be called to occupy in the house of many mansions. His convictions regarding the future of our race are likely to be serious, and his expressions not lightly uttered. The question suggested is a tremendous one. No other interest compares for one moment with that belonging to it. It is not only ourselves that it concerns, but all whom we love or ever have loved, all our human brotherhood, as well as our whole idea of the Being who made us, and the relation in which He stands to His creatures.

The generally preferred belief of the Protestant world, as embodied in their published creed is, that the great mass of mankind are destined to an eternity of suffering. That this eternity is to be one of bodily pain—of "torment"—is the literal teaching of Scripture, which has been literally intrepreted by the theologians, the poets, and the artists of many long ages which followed the acceptance of the recorded legends of the Church as infallible. The doctrine has always been recognized, as it is now, as a very terrible one. It has found a support in the story of the fall of man, and the view taken of the relation of man to his Maker since that event. The hatred of God to mankind in virtue of their "first disobedience" and inherited depravity is at the bottom of it. The extent to which that idea was carried is well shown in the expressions I have borrowed from Jonathan Edwards. According to his teaching—and he was a reasoner who knew what he

was talking about—man inherits the curse of God as his principal birthright. . . .

How shall we characterize the doctrine of endless torture as the destiny of most of those who have lived, and are living, on this planet? I prefer to let another writer speak of it. Mr. John Morley uses the following words: "The horrors of what is perhaps the most frightful idea that has ever corroded human character, the idea of eternal punishment." Sismondi, the great historian, heard a sermon on eternal punishment, and vowed never again to enter a church holding the same creed. Romanism he considered a religion of peace and mercy by the side of what the English call the Reformation.

I mention these protests because I happen to find them among my notes, but it would be easy to accumulate examples of the same kind. When Cowper, at about the end of the last century, said satirically of the minister he was attacking:

"He never mentioned hell to ears polite,"

he was giving unconscious evidence that the sense of the barbarism of the idea was finding its way into the pulpit. When Burns, in the midst of the sulphurous orthodoxy of Scotland, dared to say:

"The fear of hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order,"

he was only appealing to the common sense and common humanity of his fellow-countrymen.

All the reasoning in the world, all the proof texts in old manuscripts, cannot reconcile this supposition of a world of sleepless and endless torment with the declaration that "God is love." . . .

The doctrine of evolution, so far as it is accepted, changes the whole relations of man to the creative power. It substitutes infinite hope in the place of infinite despair for the vast majority of mankind. Instead of a shipwreck, from which a few cabin passengers and others are to be saved in the long-boat, it gives mankind a vessel built to endure the tempests, and at last to reach a port where at the worst the passengers can find rest, and

where they may hope for a home better than any which they ever had in their old country. It is all very well to say that men and women had their choice whether they would reach the safe harbor or not. But which course we shall take depends very much on the way the choice is presented to us, and on what the chooser is by nature. What he is by nature is not determined by himself, but by his parentage. "They know not what they do." In one sense this is true of every human being. The agent does not know, never can know, what makes him what he is. What we most want to ask of our Maker is an unfolding of the divine purpose in putting human beings into conditions in which such numbers of them would be sure to go wrong. We want an advocate of helpless humanity whose task it shall be, in the words of Milton:

"To justify the ways of God to man."

While there is much in the way in which this gifted writer looks at this subject with which we sympathize, and while the views of one with such a well-poised mind and healthy nature may well command respect, we yet beg leave to remind him that there is a much better way of obtaining relief from this hard doctrine than is implied in his references to the "recorded legends" of the Church and "proof texts in old manuscripts." Dr. Holmes assumes that the Bible clearly teaches this hard doctrine, and, therefore, would impugn the record. On the contrary, the Bible, studied in full, yields it no support. The whole scheme of revelation is clearly inconsistent with it. But a single text in the English New Testament unequivocally teaches it (Matt. xxv, 46). The other texts all borrow their interpretation from this. But, to say nothing of the variations in some old versions, and of the milder meaning of the original Greek terms for "ever-

lasting punishment," we do not hesitate to say that we would sooner believe this text to be an interpolation, than to allow it to contradict the whole Bible teaching concerning the purpose of God in man's creation and redemption, and to wholly blot out from its pages the "hope toward God" contained in the provision to redeem mankind from death. The doctrine of the resurrection is the key-doctrine of Scripture. It is because of the blindness that will not see that our Lord is speaking in that chapter of His judgment of the *living*, and not of the *risen* nations of mankind, that the old interpretation is so obstinately clung to, and the whole mass of Scripture teaching as to the place and meaning of resurrection in the divine economy is ignored. Moreover, it is only necessary to grasp the doctrine of all Scripture concerning the power of redemption as lodged in an elect seed of which Christ is the Head, and whose redemptive power is not paralyzed by death but reaches its results through death, and in triumph over it, to banish all this nightmare of horror under which the Church and the world have been so long shrouded, and to find the principle also which opens the way for all those brighter views of man's progress and destiny which Dr. Holmes tells us the doctrine of evolution is opening up to the race.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

The recent occurrence of this parable in the International series of Sunday School lessons has given occasion for a wide-spread study and discussion of its meaning, and, doubtless, in many schools and churches the opportunity

has been used to re-enforce the old doctrine of the eternal torment of the wicked. A correspondent from Chicago gives an instance of how this lesson was handled in a Bible class in one of the Presbyterian churches of that city.

Considerable discussion was had on the condition of Dives. There were several stiff Presbyterians in the class who stuck to the standards, as did also the leader. He asked what kind of a place we supposed hell was. He said he didn't suppose we could form any idea of its misery if we grouped together in one picture all the wickedness and suffering we had seen or read of; and then he drew a word-picture as horrible as he could make it, which he described as nothing to what the place really is, where the inhabitants are constantly growing worse and their punishment increasing. Some one asked how about the prayer he prayed that his brothers might know of his sufferings that they might escape such a doom. The leader replied that the reason of the request was that he did not want them to come to the same place to add to his torment by taunting him for being the cause of their being there; that tormenting each other would be one of the principal features of their misery, and from it there would be no relief. It was eternal. "As the tree falls so it lies."

It would be too much to hope that there was not very much of this kind of ignorant and pretentious handling of the Word of God throughout the land on that day. Observe how much must be assumed, how much must be read into the narrative, before such lucrubations can be drawn out of it. It is assumed,

1. That Dives was a very wicked man. This *may* have been so, but all the narrative states is that "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." He was doubtless luxurious and self-indulgent, but Abraham does not rebuke him as an extraordinary sinner nor upbraid him for his treatment of Lazarus.

2. That there was no gleam whatever of pity nor brotherly compassion in his desire that his brothers should be warned, so that they might escape that place of torment.

3. That the soul of Dives, which is represented as in torments in hades after the death of the body, is indestructible: that it cannot, as Jesus affirms, be destroyed in hell (Matt. x. 28).

4. That the torment described is endless and forever increasing.

5. That because the gulf between Abraham's bosom and Dives was then impassable, no intervention of God's grace or no possible change in the condition of Dives could ever make it passable.

6. That a subsequent resurrection of the rich man from the dead would bring no possible change for the better in his condition, but would only make it far worse.

But what now is the obvious lesson of this parable?

Upon the face of it it teaches simply this, that, notwithstanding the present differences in the outward condition of men, every man must in the end be tried by the same unerring principles of judgment, and every man be dealt with according to his works. Every man's life must be searched and proved by God's consuming fire. Lazarus' time of trial was in this life, when, "full of sores," sick and poor he was laid at the gate, that his wretched life might be perhaps sustained by the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Lazarus, then, had his "evil things," his sore discipline under the chastening hand of God. But this chastisement prepared him for a better future. He died and was "comforted." In due time the rich man, who had had his "good things" in this life, died. But no such

chastening had wrought in him the peaceable fruits of righteousness. And so his time of suffering came. When Lazarus was comforted he was tormented. The word "torment" (*basanos*, a touch-stone) and its derivatives always carries with it the idea of being put to the proof. Hence persons suffering under the burdens of this life were said to be tormented, as, for example, in Matthew viii, 6, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." So Lazarus had been in this life thus tested in the school of suffering. Dives had here escaped, but his testing-time was sure to come. "Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." The lesson is that the consuming fire of God must sooner or later try the fabric of every man's life, of what sort it is. And for those who escape here, the trial will be all the more severe hereafter. Nothing can avert or arrest this fire of God. There will be no escape from this torment until it has thoroughly done its work: the fire is unquenchable. Abraham could not do anything, therefore, for the rich man's relief. But his injunction to him, "Son, remember," is not simply a word of reproach. It is also an admonition to him to humble himself under the mighty hand of God.

We say, therefore, that this parable decides nothing, one way or the other, as to how long Dives should endure his suffering, or whether or not it would be finally destructive, or what was the ultimate purpose of God in inflicting it, save that we are told that the rich man's time of trial would overtake him beyond the grave, as that of Lazarus had reached him here. Much less does it attempt to explain the effect upon the rich man's future of the provision which Jesus was about to make through His own death

and resurrection for a future recovery of mankind from death—every man in his own order. It was not His way to unfold the meaning of this coming triumph over death and hell until it was accomplished. It was reserved for the apostles, after the victorious Christ had shed down upon them the Holy Spirit, to discern the meaning of this great event, and to hold up the torch of this great hope above the darkness of the world and of the grave. Hence we find no such teaching in their sermons and epistles, and no such inferences drawn from their Lord's teaching, as are given in the extract above referred to. Not a word is found in the record, from their lips or pens, which fairly teaches the everlasting torment in hell fire of wicked men, or which puts such contempt upon their Lord's victory over death as the Son of Man for men, as to suppose that the resurrection of the unjust is void of any gleam of "hope toward God" (Acts xxiv, 15), but is a mere device for continuing their existence in restored manhood through unending ages in an eternal hell.

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY.

Our objection to Liberal Christianity—so-called—is that in its attempts to give scientific statement to the Christian system, and to reduce its verities within the limits of the order of nature, it belittles or even denies the prime fact upon which the whole system is based. That the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the new-creation of humanity in Him, may somehow be comprehended in the

grand scheme of nature, and be the proper development of divine forces put into it from the foundation of the world is quite probable. But, that this uprising of humanity above the power of death is the grand result aimed at in the divine plan of creation is the one truth to which Christianity bears witness. Any system of liberal opinion, therefore, which ignores the resurrection of Christ, and is agnostic concerning a future life for man, is antagonistic to the Christian faith, and to make any sort of alliance with it is to imperil the name of Christian.

The rapid spread of the doctrine of evolution, with its new philosophy of man and of nature, has been the chief cause in our day of attempts to interpret Christianity after the fashion of *Robert Elsmere.* But they will be short-lived. Either such interpreters must abandon the name of Christian and go to their own place, or, if honest, they will be led to see the hastiness and crudeness of their conclusion, that there is no place in the orderly scheme of the world for such an event as the resurrection, and such a hope for the future of mankind as it implies. Already the reaction has set in. The doctrine of evolution, instead of proving to be a mortal foe to Christianity, is fast being recognized as its ally, and as preparing the minds of men for the final and splendid demonstration of its truth. It reveals to us a God working for the good of man, and toward his elevation through all the ages past, and gives us infinite hope as to what He will do for him in the future. It puts new meaning into the old truth of natural religion "In Him we live and move and have our being," and makes it probable that the love and power which has raised man above the brute will not cease its operation, until it

has raised him up to be one with God. And so it prepares us for the revelation of that upward step in the progress of creation by which God has forever united man with Himself in the resurrection of the Son of Man from the dead.

THE LATE CARDINAL NEWMAN.

The recent death of this eminent man has turned the attention of the religious world afresh to the controversies and experiences through which he was led to find rest at last in the Papal fold. With all his superior ability and saintliness of spirit, we cannot avoid observing in his religious character a trace of morbidness, and in his view of the world a tinge of pessimism. A larger element of hopefulness for himself and for mankind, based on a more hopeful confidence in God, would have saved him from taking the step which severed him from his former friends and transferred his great abilities to the service of the Roman Church. In the following extract which we make from his *Apologia*, our readers will recognize what we mean when we say, that there was a prime mistake in the conception he had formed of the relation which God holds to the world of mankind. We believe that it is a defective view of the teaching of Scripture, and a view which neither the study of nature or of mankind bears out, to assume at the outset that "*if* there be a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator." We cannot admit the truth of any view which casts such a reflection upon His wisdom and His power. And therefore we

are compelled to say, that something of symmetry and beauty must be lacking in the development of a religious life that starts out with this idea of God. Happily in our day the scientific study of the origin and progress of man is opening the eyes of Christian people to the fact that much of the theological doctrine of "the fall" has no support in Scripture. And hence the old idea that the Creator of the human race has been wrathful toward it from the beginning will have to be given up, even though venerable systems and institutions that rest upon that idea must be thereby rudely shaken.

But to the extract:

To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, "having no hope and without God in the world," all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.

What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from His presence. Did I see a boy of good make and mind, with the tokens on him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birthplace or his family connections, I

should conclude that there is some mystery connected with his history, and that he was one of whom, from one cause or others, his parents were ashamed. Thus only should I be able to account for the contrast between the promise and the condition of his being. And so I argue about the world; *if* there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence; and thus the doctrine of what is theologically called original sin becomes to me almost as certain as that the world exists, and as the existence of God.

And now supposing it were the blessed and loving will of the Creator to interfere in this anarchial condition of things, what are we to suppose would be the methods which might be necessarily or naturally involved in His object of mercy. . . . There is nothing to surprise the mind, if He should think fit to introduce a power into the world, invested with the prerogatives of infallibility in religious matters. Such a provision would be a direct, immediate, active, and prompt means of withstanding the difficulty; it would be an instrument suited to the need; and, when I find that this is the very claim of the Catholic Church, not only do I feel no difficulty in admitting the idea, but there is a fitness in it which recommends it to my mind. And thus I am brought to speak of the Church's infallibility as a provision, adopted by the mercy of the Creator, to preserve religion in the world, and to restrain that freedom of thought which of course in itself is one of the greatest of our natural gifts, and to rescue it from its own suicidal excesses.

Of course we all admit that only a divine energy can grapple with and overcome the evil of the world, but, besides the question of God's relation to the world under this discipline of its evil, as requiring the propitiatory intervention of a priesthood, there is the further question, as to whether the divine energy for its cure has been deposited in a hierarchy, or whether it works through in-

dividual human souls, associated together indeed in a body, but each one in his lot and measure made a depositary of this power. The hierarchical idea of the Church cramps the development of individual effort and responsibility and fosters the mechanical idea of salvation. Whatever may have been the usefulness of the Roman Catholic system in the past, certainly it cannot possess the future. A significant proof of this is, the waning influence of the former great Catholic powers of the world, and the wide-spreading power of great Protestant states, one of which —Great Britain—now dominates a larger portion of the globe than was ever before included in one empire.

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

It seems impossible to resist the conclusion of the ethnologists, that the human race has lived on this planet a very much longer time than the old chronology provides for. They find proofs of at least three epochs in human development preceding the historic, and reaching back to the glacial period. The oldest of these ages is the Palæolithic, during which men lived in caves and made use of the rudest stone implements. The Neolithic age succeeds this, in which we find some progress in the construction of habitations, a higher grade of stone instruments and flint weapons. The lake-dwellers were a race still more advanced, with some knowledge of pottery and of the use of bronze. For many thousands of years the earth was inhabited by these lower races of men, before marked traces of civilization begin to appear and far beyond the

reach of our knowledge of historic man. Even conservative investigators estimate these primeval ages as stretching back through many myriads of years.

Current theology has never given proper consideration to these facts of the human race, nor fairly dealt with the great problem of God's relation to the world of mankind in the light of them. Indeed its systems were framed before these facts were brought to light. How futile to attempt to make the theology of the covenant of works and of the fall and of the *ab initio* immortality of man, and of his probation for an eternal destiny to heaven or hell under full and sufficient light, to fit in with these facts. We want a reconstruction of the whole body of divinity, based upon the true facts of Scripture and of science concerning man as in *process of training* for the goal of immortal manhood, and not as beginning at that perfection and falling away from it. And we want a broader Scriptural and scientific philosophy of the relation of the individual man to the race, and of how God is pursuing His ideal of manhood through the progress of the race and of its best representatives, until a chosen seed, in reaching the heights of eternal life, become the redeemers and helpers of their brethren who have fallen in the struggle and have gone down as captives to death.

AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE.

The Old Testament constantly teaches that men who fail of salvation in their own generation may reach it through their offspring. We can conceive of this resulting in one of two ways:

1. Those of their seed who should hereafter inherit eternal life may, after death and resurrection, become ministers of recovery to their dead kindred who are yet captives in sheol. Or,

2. *While fighting the battle of this life* their dead kindred may be so represented in them, or associated with them, that they may wage it, not only for themselves but for them, so that, when they get victory over death, they may, as did our Lord, lead captivity captive—that is, set free many captives. These conquests over death would therefore be not something wholly of the future; they would be won *on the arena of this life,* and we, who are fighting this battle, would therefore be contending in it not merely for ourselves, but for those who have gone before us.

All this implies that there are hidden depths in man's being of which we are unconscious, and that the real sheol where the dead lie concealed from us are these depths. That the conflict of the Christian, as did that of Christ, ranges through all heights and depths of being is implied in such passages as Rom. viii, 18–22, 37–39. Ephes. i, 3; ii, 1–6; iv, 8–10; vi, 10–13. There is a sense in which the man-nature covers all these depths and heights, and therefore it does not seem to be improbable that, in some way unknown to us, the being of the dead may be preserved and concealed in that of the living, so that they without us cannot be made perfect.

CATHOLICITY.—But surely, if it be true that the extension of the Church is to be found in giving scope to each, believing that men may have some quota of truth

to contribute to the sum total, and some real special work which God has given them to do, why should men standing in the position of guides in this Church be unwilling to allow them to pause in the inspiration of their zeal and effort to choose each man his beam in the building up of the temple. Surely we have been taught that "the true catholicity of the Church, the true supremacy of Christianity is not so much in this, that it can spread into other lands and claim dominion over races merely, but that it opens its arms to each new truth, that it is wide and comprehensive as the Bible is wide, manifold as life is manifold." In this wise recognition of individual energies the Church's work shall go forward.—*The Rev. W. Boyd Carpenter, D. D.*

PROPHECY.—The glory of prophecy is its power to infuse a fresh stream of spiritual vigor into established forms of life. The tendency of organized society is toward institutions, and the peril here is of satisfaction in these monuments of human pride. The writer just referred to declares that the people is blessed which, "generation after generation has a school of prophets to break up those structures and to call men back with Isaiah-like yearning to the love of the living God." Such was the work of prophecy in Israel. But, in this large sense, there have been prophets in all nations, and these have succeeded or failed, according as they have wrought toward this great end of spiritual regeneration. Greece had her prophets, but they were satisfied to minister to the "martial and heroic pride" of the nation. They helped to "disintegrate the old sacred foundations," but they substituted no real

divine material in place of what they destroyed. The Christian preacher is our prophet to-day, and if he is true to his mission, he is ever calling us back to the real, the eternal, the spiritual, interpreting to us the meaning of passing events in this light, and warning us of the transitoriness of all institutional life. Often this prophetic office is held by a man of the people who partakes of the simplicity and clear vision of unsophisticated humanity, and who is hereby able to pierce the shams and expose the hollowness of much that we proudly boast as part of our civilization. Happy such prophets seldom are, but blessed the people among whom they dwell.—*Old Testament Student.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

NEED OF CANDOR.—We clip the following from the *Presbyterian Journal:*

A writer in the Belfast *Witness*, says the *Presbyterian Review*, of Canada, "who is critically examining the new Articles of Faith of the Presbyterian Church of England, thinks that the Church is placed in the awkward position of seeming to have two creeds—the old Confession and the new Articles, the latter for those outside her Communion and the former for the Church herself, and that members of other denominations will naturally conclude that the Confession is her true creed and that the Articles were deliberately prepared by the Church for the sole purpose of beguiling into her fold those whom by other means she had been unable to attract. He also comes to the conclusion that the doctrine of the Confession is *not* summarized in the Articles, and that the doctrine of one is not the doctrine of the other. He goes on to show that in some of the most important Articles the doctrine is so ingeniously and adroitly expressed, and there is such a dexterous balancing of words and phrases in expressing it that the intention evidently is to leave behind a meaning of such beautiful ambiguity, that evangelical Christians of opposite creeds might

each find in it his own views. From an examination of the use of the personal and possessive pronouns, *we*, *us*, *our* in Articles vi, vii, viii, and ix, he affirms it is difficult to say whether the Articles favor the doctrine of a limited or of a universal Atonement."

The danger here brought to view is one to which we have often alluded as attendant upon the revision movement now in progress in the Presbyterian Church of this country. That Church is now addressing herself to an impossible task, which is to reconcile the formulas of the Westminster Confession to the larger views of truth which the Spirit of God has opened before the mind and heart of the Church in our day. If the revision goes on upon the lines marked out for it, the result must be this same paltering with ambiguous phrases and uncandid statements. The Church of God has no business with such double dealing. It is true that this often arises from an attempt to combine in one formula what appear to be two sides of Scripture teaching. But it would be far better to allow Scripture to speak for itself in such a case, than to bind men's consciences by a formula of our own devising.

The radical trouble with the Presbyterian movement is the persistent refusal to acknowledge some principles taught in Scripture, while stout contention is made for certain other principles. The sovereignty of God is doubtless a foundation-truth; so also is His universal and impartial love. The doctrine of election is a precious truth; so also is the fact that the same deep purpose that provides for the salvation of the elect includes also a purpose of ultimate blessing to the non-elect, of which the elect are the chosen instruments. The doctrine of divine retribution for sin in another life and of resurrection according to deeds done is an undoubted truth; so also is the fact that the provision to raise all men from the dead is due to the redemptive work of Christ, and is the fruit of His triumph over death won for the race. The Westminster Confession makes this provision an inconceivable disaster for the whole of mankind, except the elect.

There is no doubt that half of the Presbyterian Church believe in their hearts that the power of Christ's redemption reaches beyond death, and avails for the recovery of multitudes of heathen and of past generations who died in their sins, and yet so sensitive

is that Church to any suggestion of hope beyond death for any of this immense class, that hardly a leader in this movement has dared to suggest that the Church ought to reconsider her statements by which she hopelessly consigns the whole of the human race outside of the elect to the flames of an everlasting torment. Unless, therefore, that Church will consent to give to the doctrine of election this wider scope which the Scriptures warrant, and to extend the light of its "hope toward God" for the dead beyond the narrow opportunities of this present life, and to honestly say so, it will be forced to repeat that paltering with words in a double sense which seems to have characterized the similar effort of their British brethren.

Mrs. Stowe on Future Punishment.—In the biography of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe recently published, we find an expression of her views on this subject in a portion of one of her letters to Lady Byron (p. 339) written in 1858:

I think very much on the subject on which you conversed with me once—the future state of retribution. It is evident to me that the spirit of Christianity has produced in the human spirit a tenderness of love which wholly revolts from the old doctrine on the subject, and I observe the more Christ-like any one becomes, the more impossible it seems for him to accept it; and yet, on the contrary, it was Christ who said, "Fear Him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell," and the most appalling language on this subject is that of Christ Himself. Certainly ideas once prevalent must certainly be thrown off. An endless infliction for past sins was once the doctrine that we now generally reject. (This is the doctrine of the Westminister Confession.—Ed.) The doctrine now taught is that of an eternal persistence in evil necessitating eternal punishment, since evil induces misery by an eternal nature of things, and this, I fear, is inferable from the analogies of nature, and confirmed by the whole implication of the Bible.

Is there any fair way of disposing of the whole current of assertion, and the still deeper undercurrent of implication on this subject, without one which loosens all faith in revelation, and throws us on pure naturalism. But of one thing I am sure—probation does not end with this life, and the number of the redeemed may therefore be infinitely greater than the world's history leads us to suppose.

Here we have another instance of the way in which the best thought and highest genius in cultured New England has sought to grapple with this deep question. Heart and soul have cried out against the old view; and yet the stern logic of the Puritan mind would not permit its complete rejection. And this because it never comprehended the gospel of the resurrection. Mrs. Stowe would have found the refuge she sought from the "stern analogies of nature" and "the whole implication of the Bible" if she had understood that, just as nature creates new life out of death and snatches beauty from decay and puts new hope into all things, so the provision to redeem man from death, while it must sort out and judge and consume his evils, carries with it a "hope toward God" for even the unjust. Her doctrine of future probation—the prevalent refuge of the New England mind—would also have been freed from the objections inseparable from it, and made more intelligent and scriptural, if she had had a clear view of this provision as God's way of meeting the curse, and not of perpetuating it, as the old Puritan theology taught.

THE NIAGARA CONFERENCE.—Full reports of the late meeting of this Conference are given in the *Faithful Witness*. From it we also learn that

"It has been determined to incorporate the Conference under the laws of Canada, and in order to guard against future apostacy, if the Lord should tarry, the treatment of doctrinal belief, adopted several years ago by the brethren, was read article by article and again adopted, and will be embodied in the act of incorporation. Of course no human measures can wholly prevent the inroads of error and the wiles of the devil; but it is a comfort to know that if there comes any departure from these articles of faith the Conference will cease to exist, as it ought to cease. Better a thousand times that there should be no Conference than a meeting of professing Christians, who will teach or receive teaching contrary to the Word of God."

Here we have another instance of the folly and conceit of good men in assuming that the "treatment of doctrinal belief" adopted by them is the final word in all Scripture interpretation, and that

the Holy Spirit has nothing further to reveal to the Church that can in any way contradict or annul what they have found out. If this is not dishonor put upon the Holy Ghost, whom these brethren profess so highly to honor, then we know not where to find it. Have they never heard that it is His office to guide the Church into all truth, and to lead her on to that unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God which shall be her perfection? (Ephes. iv, 8–16.) No class of teachers insist so strenuously that the Church has not yet reached this goal, and deplore more loudly her ignorance and feebleness. Is not her condition positive proof that she has not yet attained to that full knowledge which can give her strength and set her free, and, therefore, that much more light is yet to break forth from God's Holy Word and much wider ranges of truth to be opened before her? And yet these brethren assume that any future gatherings of this Conference that shall refuse to keep within the limits of its present articles of faith will thereby of necessity be guilty of "teaching contrary to the Word of God."

With all their professed reverence for that Word we are bold to tell them that they persistently decline to acknowledge some of its most important principles. A few years ago we proposed to some of the leaders to bring before the Conference the Scripture proofs of the principle that resurrection is essentially redemptive, and that this provision for mankind of another life beyond death opened a way of blessing for even the unjust. So committed were they to the dogma that there can be no possible hope beyond death for any class but saints, that they would not give room to any denial of it. And yet the principle we proposed to discuss underlies the Scriptures and is vital to any true understanding of them.

They might at least have heard, and then refuted, if the doctrine urged could not stand the test.

In this, and in similar cases, these brethren disregard the injunction "Quench not the Spirit, Despise not prophesyings." We now see that they propose to perpetuate their refusal of further light by putting it into the charter. That spiritual blight will sooner or later be the result of such a course we are quite sure.